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INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 7912
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2371
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2187
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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 2007

In Today's Papers

Leaders Call for Common Sense as Turkey Prepares for Nevruz
All papers report on the eve of the Nevruz Festival. President Sezer called Tuesday for "common sense" for all, warning against "provocations" during the festival. "The importance of friendship, love, and tolerance is emphasized with Nevruz," Sezer said. Prime Minister Erdogan told his party group meeting yesterday, "Nevruz is a day of joy. Those who want to turn it into a day of mourning will not be able to disrupt our brotherhood," calling on all to "be careful." Papers report the website of the Turkish General Staff (TGS) carries, for the first time, a message for the Nevruz celebrations, reading, "Happy Nevruz holiday, we wish it will bring peace and love." Papers also report the Interior Ministry warned all 81 Turkish provinces against provocations, ordering the authorities to allow only Turkish flags during celebrations. The Diyarbakir Governor's Office has allowed celebrations in the city center, banning, however, placards and posters other than the Turkish flag. Papers say Kurdish party HAKPAR was denied permission to hold a rally in the city, and lawyer Eren Keskin of the Human Rights Association (IHD) was detained when she came to the city to participate in celebrations.

Donors' Contribution to Iraq Low

The Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports the fifth donors' committee meeting of International Iraq Rebuilding Fund, which ended in Istanbul on Tuesday, did not produce the expected results. Iraq's Planning and Development Minister Ali Baban said they could only collect USD 10 million from Iraq's neighbors, far below the expected amount of USD 40 million. Baban stressed Iraq's neighbors should do more.

Editorial Commentary on Iraq War Anniversary

Sami Kohen writes in the mainstream daily Milliyet: "It is difficult to imagine and understand that the US, in its superpower capacity, failed in Iraq. Even though the military portion of the Iraq operation went successfully, the political situation went just

the opposite and led the country to the point of civil war. One of the primary reasons for this failure stems from the fact that the US could not comprehend Iraq. As author of the book Understanding Iraq, Professor William Polk noted the US shaped a strategy for Iraq without understanding the country's characteristics. The US either failed to comprehend the social, historical and cultural nuances of Iraq or got them in the wrong context. There has been a chain of mistakes during the last four years, including the dissolving Iraqi army, torture scenes from prisons, oversight of sectarian differences and many others. At the current stage, the Iraq exit strategy does not necessarily resemble the exit from Vietnam. It has to be a safe and sound way formed by United Nations."

Mete Cubukcu writes in the leftist daily Birgun: "After four years of occupation, Iraq has reached the 'words are not enough' point. The consequences of the Iraq occupation will definitely not be limited to Iraq and will spread to the entire region. Nobody can make an assessment about Iraq's future any longer. And the US is completely helpless -- the most recent plan as put out by President Bush has already collapsed. Not only is the plan collapsing but the US army is collapsing as well. The US army has never been so cruel in its history. The Iraq occupation is like a polluted environment which covers all of us."

Turkey Won't Sign Kyoto

The liberal Radikal reports Ankara responded to the EU pressure to sign the Kyoto Protocol by saying that if it is a party to the agreement, Turkey will have to close its coal-operated power plants, which will deal a huge blow to economy. "In order to change our energy policy and turn to renewable energy sources, Turkey needs USD 20 billion," Ankara told the EU through the Turkish Environment Ministry. The ministry data says the Turkish annual per capita of

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carbon dioxide emissions is 3.3 tons, far below the 11.1 tons of OECD members and 9 tons of EU countries. Turkey, however, with its population of 70 million, ranks 13th among the countries with the highest green gas emissions, and tops the list of the countries which have increased gas emissions the most, says Radikal.

Increased Tension in Cyprus between Government and Military
Sabah, Cumhuriyet, Milliyet, Radikal and others: The tension between Turkish Cypriot "Prime Minister" Ferdi Sabit Soyer and the Turkish Peacekeeping troops' commander General Hayri Kivrikoglu increased after the General criticized the "PM" for not singing the Turkish national anthem at his Republican Turk's Party congress and asked the "PM" to prove his Turkishness, at a reception the other day. In a televised speech yesterday, Soyer described the incident as a reflection of the election period in Turkey and said "nobody can doubt our Turkishness, we are Kemalists." Turkish-Cypriot Opposition Party, the National Unity Party' (UBP) chairman Tahsin Ertugruloglu said "it was a sad incident but if you are a Turkish Cypriot party, you must explain why you did not sing the national anthem."

Conflict between Higher Council of Judges-Prosecutors and Justice Ministry; YOK and Education Ministry
Radikal, Milliyet, Vatan, Cumhuriyet and others: The Higher Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors (HSYK) could not convene yesterday as Justice Minister Cemil Cicek and the Undersecretary did not attend the meeting. HSYK acting chairman Mahmut Acar accused Minister Cicek of preventing the activities of the council and intervening in the judiciary.

The Education Ministry yesterday criticized the Board of Higher Education's (YOK) attempt to appoint rectors to 15 newly established universities, claiming that doing so would violate the Constitution and related laws.

TV Highlights
NTV (6 A.M.)

Domestic News

- Turkish military sources confirmed deployment of troops to the east and southeast, but rejected reports claiming cross-border

incursions into northern Iraq.

- The head of the local DTP branch and eight other party members have been taken into custody in security searches in the western city of Manisa.

- Today AKP provincial leaders will go to the party headquarters in Ankara to express their preferences regarding the election of a new president.

- Two Turkish soldiers have been wounded in a landmine blast in the southeastern province of Bitlis.

International News

- Egyptian President Mubarak will pay an official visit to Turkey on Wednesday to discuss regional matters and natural gas trade between Egypt and Turkey.

- Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat accused Greek Cypriot leader Tassos Papadopoulos of attempting to block the implementation of the direct trade protocol between the EU and Turkish Cyprus.

- Students in Britain could be banned from wearing full-face Muslim veils for security or educational reasons under recent government guidelines.

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